

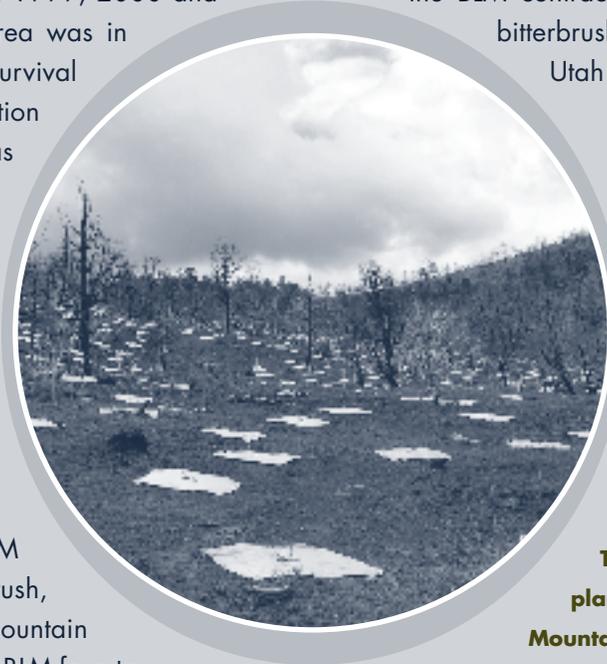
news from the department of the interior, bureau of land management • summer 2005

BLM Nevada's Largest Ever Forest Restoration

With more than five hundred thousand seedlings to plant on forest sites burned by wildland fire, the BLM's Elko Field Office, working with the Battle Mountain Field Office, did the only thing they could—take it one step at a time. Now, four years after the start of the massive tree and shrub planting effort, the job is done and it's time to think RAIN.

More than 2 million acres of forest and rangelands burned in northeast Nevada in 1999, 2000 and 2001. Much of the burned area was in habitat that is critical to the survival of mule deer herds. The restoration efforts had to get going as quickly as possible to slow soil erosion and get the seedlings in before cheatgrass could take over.

The project was broken into phases and the first step was to collect native seed. In 2000 and 2001, Nevada Division of Forestry crews helped BLM forestry staff gather bitterbrush, pinyon pine, Utah juniper and mountain mahogany for upland sites. The BLM forestry staff also gathered quaking aspen and narrow-leaf cottonwood for riparian areas. Phase two was to send the local native seeds to a Forest Service nursery in Placerville, Calif., where they were sown from 2001 to 2003 and grown as container or bare root stock and lifted for planting from 2002 through this year.



Phase three was the planting. Most of the riparian species were planted in 2001 and 2002. With the first major shipment of 103,000 bitterbrush seedlings in 2003, a commercial planting contractor was hired. Last year, the majority of the planting stock was shipped and commercial planting crews planted more than 600 acres with seedlings: 300,000 bitterbrush; 70,000 pinion pine; 7,000 mountain mahogany; and several thousand Utah juniper. This year was relatively easy—the BLM contractor only had to plant 47,000 bitterbrush seedlings and a few thousand Utah juniper.

Commercial contract planting crews from Oregon not only planted the seedlings, but also mulched and tubed the seedlings to give them the best possible chance of survival.

(continued on page 3)

PHOTO CAPTION:

The Pony Creek bitterbrush planting south of Carlin in the Pinion Mountains. The cone-like projections, called "Tree Pees," form a protective shell

around the seedling while it establishes and then biodegrades within four years. The mulch mats under the seedlings help retain moisture and reduce competition from other plants.

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State Director's Comments



"The future of Nevada will to a large part be shaped by the future of public land management." This is the opening sentence of the BLM Nevada vision statement and these words have been the driving force behind my commitment to serving the citizens of this great state as the state director. By the time this edition of Nevada Sage is published, I will have left my BLM position and moved on to new adventures.

After 32 years in public service, at the state and federal levels of government, I have decided it is time to retire. I have truly enjoyed the opportunities we have had to work together to make positive differences in people's lives and in the resources we manage. Managing 48 million acres causes a certain amount of anxiety. Yet there is a greater sense of satisfaction in knowing the opportunities we have to enhance the quality of life for the people who live in and visit this state. I am convinced the Nevada State Director position is the best job in the BLM.

I could reminisce about our collective accomplishments, however, I would rather discuss the future of public lands.

The BLM, as a federal land management agency, faces important challenges in the years ahead. In Nevada, we are witnessing unprecedented social, economic, environmental, and cultural change. Increasing populations, polarization of special interest groups, and budget limitations challenge effective resource management. Of special concern are wildfires, a changing water and land base, impacts from irresponsible off-highway vehicle use, and invasive species. Even though significant change is occurring, I firmly believe that BLM is prepared to address these challenges.

My optimism is based on my knowledge that we have much more in common than we have differences when it comes to how your public lands should be managed. Most of us want clean water and air, and a healthy environment for plants, animals, and humans. We want productive and sustainable ecosystems. We want opportunities to use public lands for recreational pursuits and we want these lands managed in a manner that will help sustain our communities and local economies. In other words, we want our public lands to be managed for multiple uses, recognizing that these assets are valued as much for wilderness as they are for mineral development. This is the basic foundation we need to build on. These mutual goals are achievable within our lifetime if we work together and focus our energies in pursuit of this common vision.

More often than not, however, we allow minor differences to be barriers to accomplishing mutual goals. There is fault all around. The BLM has sometimes allowed administrative and bureaucratic processes to become more important than working with stakeholders to accomplish work on the ground. We all seem to prefer to attend conferences to discuss what the resource management agencies should be doing rather than "just doing the work." Most unfortunate of all are those who prefer conflict over cooperation and progress.

If the public lands are to be managed appropriately, it is up to us as individuals to act responsibly. There will never be enough federal or

state appropriations to address the tremendous needs that we have as a nation. If we truly care about our natural resources, the burden falls on each of us to do the right thing right the first time. We cannot afford the high costs of mitigating impacts from actions that could have been easily avoided. While I am proud that BLM employees and public land stakeholders are working closer together than ever before, we need to do much more.

The BLM's role is changing. Employees are more involved in planning for and providing oversight for tasks which are being performed by non-BLM employees, including volunteers and stewardship groups. While some employees see this trend as abdicating the BLM's responsibility for managing public lands, I contend this is the only realistic approach we now have for fulfilling our stewardship responsibilities.

I have a statement over my desk whose author is unknown. It reads: "It is not important that we be remembered or immortalized in some manner, but that we pass on to those who will follow more than just inheritable traits or genetic materials. Other animals are restricted to being genetic receptacles solely involved in sustaining a continuity of life through time, but we can also leave our heirs a legacy of experience, knowledge, and values, as well as viable environments that will insure their survival, fulfillment, and happiness."

I have tried my best to adhere to this principle as the BLM's Nevada State Director. Whatever the future may hold for me, be assured that I will remain an advocate for the responsible use and management of our nation's public lands. I appreciate your past support and for your continued efforts in leaving the public's land better off for our having been here.

— **Bob Abbey**

Nevada Sage is published by the Nevada State Office, Bureau of Land Management, to inform the public and employees about BLM programs, people and activities in Nevada.

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Design by MeshCreative www.meshcreative.com

BLM/NV/GI-05/008

BLM NEVADA'S LARGEST EVER FOREST RESTORATION (continued from page 1)

"The planting window is usually very short, only two to three weeks for most years," said Tyson Gripp, rangeland management specialist and currently the acting forester in the Elko Field Office. "It's the period of time between snowmelt and before the soil dries up. We were fortunate this year and had good planting weather."

Severe drought combined with high winds over three consecutive fire seasons beginning in 1999, played a key role in burning about 2.8 million acres in Nevada. Fire is a natural process—it has historically renewed vegetation types and habitat—but three consecutive non-typical years consumed large expanses of forest and critical wildlife habitat, especially mule deer winter range, causing major concern among federal and state agencies and the public. When large expanses of forest types are killed by wildfire, those sites may take well over 100 years to regenerate naturally because of a lack of seed source and because the sites are fairly dry. Another major issue that land managers now face with wildfires is the spread of exotic plants such as cheatgrass. These exotic plants quickly invade disturbed sites such as burned areas and rob critical soil moisture from the soil before native species can germinate. In the aftermath of the 1999 fires, it was apparent that forest stands and crucial mule deer habitat would need help.

Partners in the project included several volunteers, the Mule Deer Foundation, Nevada Division of Forestry and U.S. Forest Service.

— **Mike Brown • Elko Field Office**
— **Skip Ritter • Nevada State Office**

Three Nevadans Receive National Volunteer Awards

Willie Stephenitch, a long-time volunteer at the BLM's Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, and Darrell and Terri Wade, Mesquite residents who oversee the Nevada Heritage Stewardship Program were presented national "Making A Difference" awards at a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Stephenitch has conducted extensive educational outreach with Red Rock visitors and the community through media contacts and hands-on projects. She designed and developed Trash Bash Day, a semi-annual clean-up event, and helps out with the annual Tortoise Trot trail run and Red Rock Day volunteer work event. Stephenitch's skills in generating visibility and participation from the community make her a treasured volunteer.

The Wade's established the Nevada Heritage Stewardship program as a non-profit organization under the auspices of the Nevada Archaeological Association and in volunteer service with the BLM's Ely Field Office. Last year, they led eight basic-training workshops where they helped train more than 100 new site stewards. They also organized a statewide site steward recognition program. In association with the workshops, the Wade's oversaw production of a revised Site Steward Training Manual and educational slide shows. Last year, their efforts led to 68 sites in 40 archaeology districts being monitored, which resulted in accurate locations of cultural features, repair of vandalized structures, clean-up of unauthorized dumps, and numerous other improvements.

Information about volunteering to work with the BLM in Nevada is available from Debra Kolkman, BLM Nevada State Volunteer Coordinator, at **(775)289-1946**. A list of volunteer opportunities with BLM and other federal agencies is available at www.Volunteer.gov/gov.

— **Debra Kolkman**
Nevada State Office



Sage Grouse Numbers Look Good in Northeastern Nevada

After two weeks of flying over nearly 1.35 million acres, initial indications are that northeastern Nevada's sage grouse populations are maintaining or increasing. The best method to monitor huge acreages of habitat is to use a helicopter, especially when you have biologists and pilots with years of experience in doing this type of work. This is the sixth consecutive year the flights have been conducted.

In April, wildlife biologists from the BLM's Elko Field Office and Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) flew over major blocks of land in the Owyhee Desert, Tuscarora Range, Independence Valley, south of Wendover and north of Montello.

"We won't have the final numbers until NDOW compiles the data and compares it with previous years' information," said BLM biologist Ken Wilkinson. "We found 33 new sage

grouse leks, or breeding display areas, and counted 1,570 male sage grouse."

There are about 1,000 documented leks in northeastern Nevada. The crew rechecked known leks and searched in areas where leks haven't been seen before but have a high probability of occurrence.

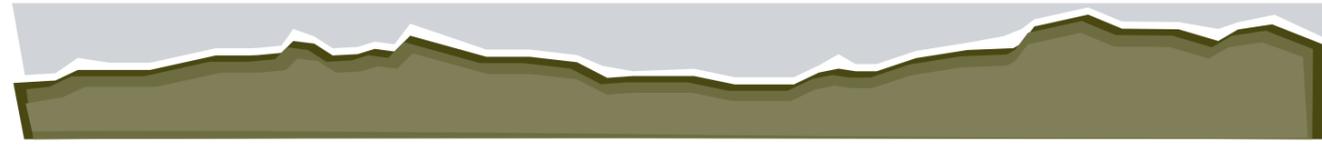
Another benefit of the flights is they help identify areas where habitat improvement projects are needed. The BLM is a partner in the Northeastern Nevada Stewardship Group, which developed the Elko County Sagebrush Ecosystem Conservation Strategy. The strategy serves as the blueprint for sage grouse monitoring and habitat conservation efforts and is part of the Governor's statewide plan for Nevada.

- Mike Brown
Elko Field Office

New Nevada Wilderness Status Map

A map showing Nevada wilderness areas and wilderness study areas is available for \$3 at all BLM offices in Nevada and the Eagle Lake and Surprise field offices in California. The 1:1 million scale map replaces the 1992 Nevada Wilderness Status Map. The map reflects changes in wilderness status since passage of a

number of laws designating wilderness during the past few years, including the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area, the Clark County Conservation of Public Lands and Natural Resources Act, and the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act.



Hunting Sage Grouse in the Dark of the Moon

It wasn't one of our better nights. It was new moon dark last summer in the Battle Mountains. We started shortly after sundown, three crews of us, stumbling around that rocky country, draining spotlight batteries until nearly 4 a.m. We saw deer, a couple of skunks, a pygmy rabbit (we hadn't known that any existed there), a few owls and a stray ghost or two. We also saw hundreds of glistening spider's eyes, which briefly raised our hopes to belong to the birds we sought. But not a single sage grouse did we see, never mind catching one.

All of this started back in 2002, when the South-Central Nevada Sage Grouse Conservation Group decided that two small, probably isolated, sage grouse populations in the Fish Creek and Battle mountains were our top priorities for salvation. Part of the solution was to figure out how many birds we actually had there, what habitat they used, where they moved seasonally, and whether these populations were truly isolated. The best way to get that information is to hang radio collars on them. Radio collars weigh about an ounce, cost about \$180 and last about eighteen months. Signals from the collar can be received for several miles under optimum conditions.

To make a long story short, an acceptable number of birds were radio-collared through dogged persistence, especially by local Nevada Department of Wildlife biologist Larry Teske and multiple capture campaigns over two years.

The effort has paid handsomely, yielding information that could have been obtained in no other way. Many of the mysteries of sage grouse life in the Fish Creek and Battle mountains have been solved. We now know where the critters consistently hang out during the daytime, where they prefer to roost, that the birds are non-migratory and that they do indeed appear to be isolated from other populations. Radio-collared birds led us to several leks that we didn't know about, and we gained insights about population levels and predation rates.

Before the batteries die, the collared birds will reveal essential knowledge of preferred nesting areas, nesting success, and brood survival.

Hunting sage grouse at night with a light, binoculars and a net is a fascinating experience. A team of hunters usually consists of at least two people: a spotter, who uses a powerful spotlight and binoculars to locate roosting birds, and a netter. The team hikes likely sage grouse roosting habitat, stopping periodically to sweep the terrain with the spotlight.

When the spotter detects the telltale eye shine of a bird, the spotlight is switched off and the distance is closed to approximately 50 meters. Then the spotlight is switched back on and the spotter and the netter rush the target while the spotter attempts to confuse the bird by shaking the light to create a strobe-like effect. Noise from a boom box is used to cover the sound of the rushing hunters. Taking care to stay slightly behind the spotlight so as not to be illuminated by its peripheral rays, the netter attempts to drop the business end of his long-handled fish net over the bird before it launches into the night.

If all goes well, and the rush is well coordinated, a bird is captured.

If you have a chance to participate in a sage grouse capture, by all means go for it. You'll witness sights and sounds undreamt of by diurnal folks - scurrying wood rats, fluttering bats, low-flying nighthawks whose orbs reflect like powerful yellow headlights, black, broad-winged owl silhouettes with eerie orange Halloween eyes, the scream of a lion, and of course the violent flapping of escaping sage grouse. But watch out for spider eyes; they'll make a fool out of you.

- Mike Stamm
Battle Mountain Field Office

Double Hot Spring – Stay Out and Stay Alive!

Making people aware of safety hazards posed by hot springs on public lands is an ongoing effort by the BLM, particularly at Double Hot Springs in the Black Rock Desert. Over the years, BLM has placed various signs and devices at Double Hot to warn visitors about using the hot springs for recreational purposes. None has lasted very long. They have been torn down or carried away by people who may have believed that BLM was overstating the problem.

Double Hot Spring is on the west edge of the Black Rock Playa, about 30 miles northeast of Gerlach. The water in the two pools and narrow outflow stream ranges from 165 degrees to 191 degrees Fahrenheit. This is hot enough to instantly cause a person's skin to peel. The clear water looks cool and inviting, providing no visual warning of its deadly heat.

On Sept. 28, 2000, two young couples cruising the Black Rock Desert with their dogs in the bed of their pick-up truck suddenly had their lives changed forever. They stopped at Double Hot Springs to motorcycle and explore the area. Their dogs jumped off the tailgate and ran to one of the two nearby pools of water, and jumped in.

The dogs yelped in pain and one of the young women jumped into the pool to help. She too began to cry out in pain and the two young men ran to the water's edge to try to pull her and the dogs out. Working frantically to save their friend and their pets, one of the men slipped into the pool, and was severely burned before he could drag himself up on the bank. Lisa O'Shea, the young woman, and the young man, Andy Crowell, suffered second and third-degree burns over 70 to 80 percent of their bodies. Both were transported to a Las Vegas hospital burn unit. O'Shea later died from her injuries and Crowell survived with serious permanent burn injuries. One dog was pulled from the pool and later died, the other could not be saved and sank to the bottom.



Two lawsuits were filed against BLM resulting from this incident, one on behalf of the relatives of O'Shea and one brought by Crowell. In early 2004, both suits were settled out of court. The first, in the death of O'Shea, was settled in the amount of \$1 million and the second, in the disability of Crowell, in the amount of \$4.2 million. In both cases, the United States admitted no liability.

The BLM can't entirely protect people from natural hazards on the public lands. However, we must do our best to make visitors aware of certain dangers. To increase awareness of the dangers at Double Hot Springs, volunteers from High Rock Trekkers, a four-wheel-drive club, built a temporary T-post and barbed-wire fence around Double Hot to discourage people from getting too close to the steep, slippery banks. A permanent fence will be built that will be designed as much as a warning structure as a barrier. A properly designed fence can be a clear

demarcation line signifying that conditions beyond it are dangerous. The intent is to warn future visitors to Double Hot that harm may result if they enter the area beyond the fence.

Every hot spring is unique. Some, like Double Hot are scalding hot (skin is scalded within three seconds in 140 degree water). However, while extreme hot water is one serious danger posed by some hot springs on public lands, it is by no means the only danger. Others include loss of consciousness from chemical fumes, cuts from sharp rocks or broken glass, and bacterial infections. So, it's wise to follow the BLM's recommendation: Hot springs on public lands—stay out and stay alive!

– Jamie Thompson
Winnemucca Field Office

Soldier Meadows Hot Springs Need Protection

A shallow ribbon of warm water runs through Soldier Meadows, an area about 50 miles north of Gerlach in the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area (NCA). Not too long ago, few people knew about or visited this area. A few rock dams strung across the creek pooled the water so it was deep enough to take a soak.

Water sources in this dry country attract livestock and humans. Word spread and recreational activities increased, including camping too near the springs and streams, use of the hot springs for bathing, road pioneering and off-highway vehicle activity. Livestock continued to graze and trample along the water. All this activity took a toll on the fragile hot springs, not to mention their associated species of plants and animals.

Several federally listed species of plants and animals live in the Soldier Meadow Area of Critical Environmental Concern. These include the threatened Soldier Meadow Desert dace, and two candidate species, the Soldier Meadow cinquefoil and the Elongate Mud Meadow springsnail. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) issued several biological opinions confirming the importance of protecting the habitat of these species. In addition, the recently approved NCA resource management plan committed BLM to implement protective measures designed to aid in the long-term recovery of the three species.

The Soldier Meadow Desert dace is the sole member of the genus *Eremichthys* and is found only in the thermal springs and their outflow streams within the Soldier Meadows area. The minnow-sized fish lives in habitats with temperatures from 64 degrees to 104 degrees F. The desert dace was federally listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 1985, with designated critical habitat.

The Soldier Meadows cinquefoil has prostrate stems with bright yellow flowers in loose clusters at the ends. It prefers moist seeps in alkaline meadows like those found in the northwest portion of Soldier Meadow or Mud Meadows. The FWS re-designated it as a candidate species in 2002.

Springsnails indicate that spring systems are functioning

and water bodies are permanent. These small snails, 1 to 2 millimeters, occupy habitats with good water quality and feed on algae. A mollusk, freshwater snail endemic to Soldier Meadow, the Elongate Mud Meadow springsnail, *Pyrgulopsis notidicola*, is currently known to inhabit only one spring. It was listed as a candidate species 2002.

Protection Actions

Two ongoing projects have substantially improved the health and sustainability of this unique ecosystem. One project is to fence the springs complex. The fencing is antelope-friendly, but will help keep grazing cattle, wild horses and burros out as well as discourage indiscriminate cross-country vehicle travel through the area.

As the recreation plan tied to the Black Rock NCA Resource Management Plan is implemented, uses will be concentrated in less sensitive areas away from the springs and streams. In combination, these actions will reduce compaction, trampling, grazing, and water quality degradation caused by camping, further damming of the streams, erosion and the presence of foreign material in the springs and streams, while providing recreation opportunities compatible with protection of the sensitive resources and species in the area.

Last September, National Public Lands Day volunteers removed several pick-up loads of trash and debris from Soldier Meadows and obliterated and re-vegetated former vehicle routes now closed to motorized use. The work was accomplished with the help of volunteers, many of which are members of Friends of Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon and BLM staff.

Much more needs to be done, but these are important steps in an ongoing effort to improve and maintain critical habitat in the Soldier Meadows area. The goal is to stabilize and improve the populations of the three special status species while improving the quality of the recreational experience for the ever increasing numbers of visitors to the Black Rock NCA.

– Jamie Thompson
Winnemucca Field Office

“Wide Open” Public Land Status to Change

Nevada’s unlimited off-highway vehicle (OHV) use on public lands is a classic example of too much of a good thing. In just two years, from 2001 to 2003, there was a 77 percent increase in OHV use in Nevada. Throughout the West during those years the increase was 36 percent. Go back a little further to 1998 the increase of OHV use in Nevada jumps to 184 percent, according to the Motorcycle Industry Council/Specialty Vehicle Institute of America.

All public lands managed by BLM are required to be designated as open, closed, or limited. The limited designation may have varying stipulations, such as limited to existing roads and trails; designated roads and trails; time of year; or permitted use.

Of the nearly 48 million acres of land administered by the BLM in Nevada, 38 million acres, or 80 percent, are designated open; roughly eight million are designated as limited, and nearly two million acres are closed.

The BLM cannot continue to manage resources effectively with the unrestricted cross-country travel allowed under the open designation. Historical uses of public lands for recreation, mining, development of natural resources and ranching has resulted in a network of roads and trails. Recently, with the explosion in population, tourism and the proliferation of off-highway vehicles, the network of roads and trails has grown at an exponential rate. Impacts caused by unrestricted cross-country travel include, habitat fragmentation, stream sedimentation, spread of noxious weeds, wilderness area incursions, cultural disturbance and vandalism.

BLM Nevada has set in motion a strategy for statewide

travel management planning. A travel management team formed to develop consistent methodology for inventorying roads and trails and a data dictionary to use with Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment.

Comprehensive travel management involves the consideration of public access, resource management, and regulatory needs through land-use planning. It should incorporate consideration of access needs and the effects of interactions among all forms of travel.

The first step in the process is to conduct route inventories by using remote sensing for mass coverage and on the ground inventories in priority areas such as areas of intensive use or areas with resource management concerns like threatened or endangered species or habitat degradation.

Route inventory and route designation will involve the public at all phases including identification of unmapped roads and trails, assistance with recording GPS points, and providing input during any designation process.

The desired future condition of travel management by BLM in Nevada would be that the majority of lands are designated as limited to existing roads and trails. Eventually, all roads and trails would be designated, signed and mapped. Open areas would be confined to specific areas and intensively managed.

OHV use designations are ultimately changed in the land use planning process, which is an open, public process. In the meantime, BLM will encourage OHV use on existing or designated roads and trails and enforce restrictions in closed areas.

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SEPTEMBER 24TH National Public Lands Day

Saturday, Sept. 24, 2005 is the 12th annual National Public Lands Day. Across the country, thousands of volunteers will be working to preserve and protect America’s natural heritage. In Nevada, BLM volunteers will be working on a number of projects ranging from improving trails and planting trees to installing a handicap-accessible trail.

BLM Nevada will host eight events. An asterisk denotes that the event will be held on a different day than Sept. 24, 2005:

Las Vegas: A handicap accessible trail in Red Rock Canyon will be installed, which will link the parking lot in Sandstone Quarry to the exhibits.

Contact: Kirsten Cannon (702) 515-5057 or kirsten_cannon@nv.blm.gov

***Las Vegas:** Sloan Canyon clean up.

Contact: Kirsten Cannon (702) 515-5057 or kirsten_cannon@nv.blm.gov

*Note: the Sloan Canyon clean up will occur a week earlier, on Saturday, Sept. 17, 2005.

Carson City: Washoe Lake State Park trail maintenance and installation of trail markers. Equestrian facilities at the park will also be upgraded and repaired.

Contact: Mark Struble (775) 885-6107 or mark_struble@nv.blm.gov

Carson City: Silver Saddle Ranch roof repair. Due to the heavy winter snow and rain, the roof of the Silver Saddle Ranch, which houses equipment and supplies, is in need of serious repair.

Contact: Mark Struble (775) 885-6107 or mark_struble@nv.blm.gov

Ely: Facilities, trails and signs at the Ward Mountain Recreation Site.

Contact: Chris Hanefeld (775) 289-1842 or chris_hanefeld@nv.blm.gov

***Caliente:** Trail work will be done at Spring Valley Trails in Lincoln County to establish a trail head.

Contact: Chris Hanefeld (775) 289-1842 or chris_hanefeld@nv.blm.gov

*Note: the Spring Valley Trails work will occur on Wednesday, Sept. 14.

Winnemucca: Winnemucca Sand Dunes clean up. A second kiosk will also be installed at the northwestern entrance.

Contact: Jamie Thompson (775)623-1541 or jamie_thompson@nv.blm.gov

Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area: Volunteers will work on the implementation of a hot springs management plan at Soldier Meadow Hot Springs.

Contact: Jamie Thompson (775)623-1541 or jamie_thompson@nv.blm.gov



Bill Gibson of Ruby Crest Ranch (on horse) discusses tree plantings with BLM employees Tyson Gripp (left), Jason Spence (right) and Rob Orr (bent over).

Trees, weeds, trash and barbecue

On May 21, volunteers with the BLM Elko Field Office planted and fenced cottonwood trees along the South Fork of the Humboldt River in an early observance of National Public Lands Day.

“We’re celebrating in May because this is the best time to plant these types of trees along the river,” said Tamara Hawthorne, BLM’s coordinator for the Elko’s event.

Sixty-three volunteers planted 78 six-foot-tall narrow leaf cottonwood trees and other broadleaf tree species just north of the reservoir dam off the Ten Mile Creek Road. The trees help restore and stabilize stream-banks. The trees are fenced to protect them from beavers. Volunteers also collected trash along the river and removed hundreds of Scotch thistle plants. Then everyone sat down to a delicious Dutch-oven lunch cooked by BLM Elko’s culinary master, Bill Roach of Wild Bills BBQ.

– Noelle White
Nevada State Office

ENGINEERING

Norm Rockwell, Engineering Excellence

Elko Field Office Civil Engineer Norm Rockwell recently received BLM's top engineering award at a ceremony in Las Vegas. Rockwell received the 2005 Gary Bauer Memorial Award for a Facility Engineer because of engineering achievements during his 21-year career with BLM.

Most recently, Rockwell's achievements include designing, reviewing designs and overseeing the construction of BLM fire stations in Carlin, Wells and Midas as well as improvements to the Elko Field Office warehouse/fire building. Rockwell designed and supervised the installation of new bridges for Trout Creek, Four Mile Creek and Susie Creek in Elko County.

He is also responsible for road maintenance, dams, water wells, recreation site maintenance and much more.

An Elko native and graduate of the University of Nevada, Reno, Rockwell is active in the community. He is a past president of the Elko Chamber of Commerce, serves as an American Red Cross CPR and First Aid instructor, is a member of the City of Elko Airport Advisory Board and is very active with Civil Air Patrol.

- Mike Brown
Elko Field Office

Wild Horse Calendar

Adopt a horse at the **National Wild Horse and Burro Center** at Palomino Valley, 20 miles north of Sparks on the Pyramid Lake Highway. Starting in July, the Center will be open Saturdays from 8 a.m. to noon. The Center is also open on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. You may view horses any time during these hours. When you are ready to select your horse, make an appointment to adopt so that a brand inspection and other necessary paperwork can be completed. **Call (775)475-2222 for details.**

Western States Wild Horse and Burro Expo

Aug. 19, 20 and 21 at the Reno Livestock Events Center, 1350 N. Wells Ave. The Expo website is www.wswhbe.com. BLM horses involved in training demonstrations at the Expo will be available for adoption at the Palomino Valley Center starting Aug. 22.

The Palomino Valley Center will be open Saturday morning, Aug. 20 for the convenience of those who are attending the Expo and wish to see the animals at Palomino Valley, the BLM's largest wild horse and burro preparation center.

Special Saturday adoption, Sept. 24 at the Palomino Valley Center. Horses gathered in the summer and fall of 2005 will be featured.

Adopt a saddle-trained gelding on Saturday, Oct. 8 in Carson City. These wild horses are gentled and trained by Warm Springs Correctional Center inmates. The facility on Edmonds Drive, Carson City, opens at 9 a.m., with oral competitive bidding at 10 a.m. Bids begin at \$150 per animal. **See the horses at www.silverstateindustries.com. For adoption details, call (775)861-6469.**

National Wild Horse and Burro Show

Henderson, Oct. 8 and 9. The event is at the Henderson Saddle Association, Boulder Highway and Sunset Road. **For details, visit www.nwha.us.**

- Maxine Shane
Nevada State Office

WEED FIGHTERS

Woad Warriors 1, Dyer's Woad 0

For one Saturday every May, pint-sized weed fighters become "**Woad Warriors.**" Armed with shovels, school children have been battling the noxious Dyer's woad, a weed species that invaded Spring Creek.

Saturday, May 14 was the eighth and last annual "**Woad Pull.**" This year the Woad Warriors got the upper hand on the infestation.

"A few years back, the infestation was so thick in some parts of Spring Creek that we kept 200 children with shovels busy digging up Dyer's woad for three hours," said Mark Coca, weeds management specialist for the BLM Elko Field Office. **"This year 85 students finished the job in two hours."**

A group of concerned citizens and agency specialists founded the Woad Warriors back in 1998, in response to a localized infestation of Dyer's woad in Spring Creek. The cooperators include the BLM, the Nevada Division of Forestry, the Forest Service, the Nevada Cooperative Extension Service, the Lamoille Conservation District and the Spring Creek Community Weed Management Area.

Efforts to recruit student volunteers targeted fifth graders. Most of the student volunteers each year have been fourth, fifth and sixth graders from Spring Creek Elementary and Sage Elementary schools. Other student volunteers came from Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H Club and the Nevada Youth Training Center. Many local grown-ups also volunteered to be Woad Warriors.

"After every Woad Pull, the Future Farmers of America alumni groups treat the volunteers to a barbecue lunch," said Coca. **"The students also receive T-shirts and water bottles to thank them for their hard work."**

An important component of the Woad Warriors' success is the emphasis on community education on noxious weed infestations. Each year the Woad Warriors planning team prepared announcements, flyers, radio spots, newspaper articles, Dyer's woad "wanted posters," and letters to Spring Creek landowners.

This year, volunteers pulled Dyer's woad on five acres of infested lands. Volunteers with shovels line up at one end of an infestation and move through the patch in formation, shoveling a few inches below the plants to cut them down. Because the Woad Pull is timed before the plants produce seeds, the plants can be left on the ground to dry up. Some infested areas also received herbicide treatment afterwards.

Dyer's woad is a member of the mustard family and is native to southeastern Russia. It was introduced accidentally into the American West as a contaminant in alfalfa seed from Europe. The Nevada population of the weed is currently limited to Elko County. However, the neighboring states of Utah, Idaho and California have seen major infestations of Dyer's woad.

Like many other competitive alien plant species, Dyer's woad crowds out native species to form dominant stands of a plant that is unpalatable to wildlife or livestock and can be economically debilitating to landowners. It also contributes to soil erosion.

"The Woad Warriors have succeeded in eliminating a small infestation before it got the chance to turn into a big one," Coca said. **"Next year we may take on Scotch thistle infestations in South Fork State Park and Carlin."**

- Richard Brown
Nevada State Office

CARLIN CLEANUP



YUCK.

Illegal dump on public land about two miles northeast of Carlin, Nevada.

BLM's Ruby Mountain Hotshot Fire Crew cleaned up trash spread over a quarter of an acre during Carlin Cleanup Week.

If you would like to join cleanup efforts this summer, please call BLM's Elko Law Enforcement Office at (775) 753-0306. To report illegal dumping, call Elko County Against Illegal Dumping (Elko Central Dispatch) at (775) 777-7300.

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